



MCOLES CELEBRATES 50 YEARS!

By WAYNE CARLSON

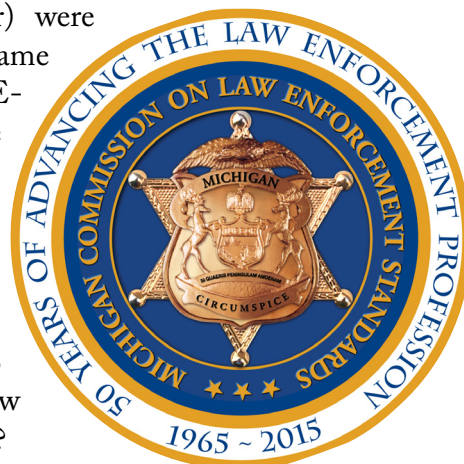
The Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) turns 50 this year. Being the oldest employee here, my boss asked me to do a newsletter article on the history of our organization. She pointed out that since I was certified back in 1976, the statutes officially refer to me as a “grandfather!” With that reminder, I put on my reading glasses and began the historical research.

As I started putting things together, I decided to scrap the typical newsletter format and include my personal perspectives in the article. Viewed through my lens, I hope you find the story of our evolution much more interesting.

You undoubtedly know what MCOLES does in 2015, but a glimpse into the past might bring meaning and context to our current responsibilities. The Michigan Law Enforcement Officers Training Council (MLEOTC) was created by statute on July 16, 1965. At the time, George Romney was Governor, the Miranda warnings became mandatory, and a person could buy a movie ticket for about \$1.25. Michigan became one of only 10 other states to establish a law enforcement training commission. The composition of MLEOTC consisted of 11 members who represented the Sheriff’s Association, Chiefs of Po-

lice, the Attorney General, State Police, and labor organizations. Administratively, MLEOTC was placed in the Department of State Police, where it resides today. The first MLEOTC meeting was held on January 21, 1966, at MSP Headquarters on Harrison Road in East Lansing.

The original staff consisted of an Executive Secretary (Noel Bufe) and a clerical secretary. In 1968, two training officers (Bob Parsons and Wes Hoes) and three clerical personnel (Jolene Paul, Anne Hewitt, and Susan Shaver) were hired. Later, Les VanBeveren became the Executive Secretary of MLEOTC. Bob and Wes have since passed, but I can only imagine what was going through their minds as they began their first day on the job. Were they excited, nervous, or apprehensive? Or, were they looking forward with anticipation to help improve the quality of the law enforcement profession in our state?



Participation in police training was voluntary until 1970 and Michigan State University offered a basic training program from 1951 until 1967. Early on, a 120-hour basic training curriculum was established by MLEOTC, as well as a set of selection standards. An agency

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR....

At my present age, 50 years does not seem like all that long ago. In fact, it really isn't when you consider the evolution of law enforcement. However, 50 years ago, the then Michigan Law Enforcement Officer Training Council was born. Now known as MCOLES, this organization has been setting the employment and training standards since 1965. Many things have changed in the law enforcement profession, philosophy, technology, and certainly the amount of public exposure. What hasn't changed is the entire premise for which the Commission was created, the need for more training and standards.



David L. Harvey

The draft of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing recently was distributed. There are similarities in my opinion to the President's Commission report from the 60's that highlighted the need for additional training and standards. That should not be surprising as we all look back into history and see what was happening in our country with civil unrest. What is surprising, given the focus on training and standards for the last 50 years, is the continued lack of funds being provided. This is at all levels of government and certainly the state of the economy is a factor. Regardless of the reasoning behind the lack of financial investment, we must find a way to still accomplish the goal of increasing the professional standards through continued education and elevating the qualifications of our officers.

I use the example of the lone police officer on patrol in an alley at 3:00 AM. What will that officer encounter? How will they react? Are they trained sufficiently to respond to the public's need and keep themselves safe? I think of that officer every day and make it my goal to provide the standards for employment that put the right person in that position and then set the training requirements for that officer to have the sufficient tools to respond to whatever they encounter.

As with the last 50 years, MCOLES stands ready, willing, and able to work along with all of you to achieve continued professional standards. We can't do it alone. This is a partnership whereby we set the standards with your input, and then not only do the agencies need to ensure that continued education and training occurs, but the individual officer must take responsibility to take advantage of every training opportunity that they can. That is what true professionals do and this is a profession and one that I am very proud to be in.



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incentive to comply with the standards was a partial reimbursement for officer salaries during training. Imagine being able to receive reimbursement for salaries in this day and age! The first certified academy was conducted in Traverse City. Sheriff Weiler of Grand Traverse County volunteered to act as the coordinator.

At the time, MLEOTC received grant money from the federal government to help standardize training in the field. In those days, programs such as the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and the Omnibus Safe Streets Act provided federal dollars to states and the staff took full advantage of these grants. In 1971, the curriculum and selection standards became mandatory through legislation signed by Governor Milliken.

I recently talked with Mr. Bill Nash, now retired. He came on board in 1970, just before the basic training curriculum became mandatory. He said, "In the early years, we were too young and naive to be scared or nervous about entering new territory. Yet we recognized our responsibilities and were looking forward to setting meaningful standards for the policing profession in our state."

The MLEOTC offices were located above the old Michigan National Bank Building in Lansing's Frandor Shopping Center. Bill said they all pushed their desks together in the center of the room so they faced each other while working. I was reminded of the old Dragnet television show I watched as a kid. Joe Friday always faced his partner—no cube farm as exists now. The MLEOTC staff worked feverishly for a few short months to develop an initial 256-hour mandatory basic training curriculum and establish regional police academies in areas of the state where none existed.

The 1970s and 1980s were characterized by research, development, and a refinement of the medical and non-medical standards. The basic training curriculum went from 120 hours to 440 hours by 1984. A reading and writing examination and a physical fitness test were established during that time. Many of you probably remember dragging the stuffed dummy across a floor or climbing over a 6-foot wall. MLEOTC also began work on the licensing examination. At the time, Michi-

gan was one of the first states in the nation to establish pre-employment testing and a mastery examination.

As I read through the old annual reports, I imagined the staff running around cones in a gymnasium as they experimented with the fitness events. One time, unbeknownst to the proctors, a candidate with an artificial leg participated in a live test. All went well until it came time for the wall. As he leaped forward, his leg came loose, flew off and landed near the proctor table! That sort of thing catches you off guard, but I suppose every test session has its moment.

In 1979, we completed the first formal job task analysis (JTA). Bill pointed out that data from the JTA surveys had to be punch-coded onto thousands of computer cards for processing. This was before the days of laptops and Excel. I'm sure the data entry clerks looked forward to the boxes and boxes of survey forms from MLEOTC.

By 1980, there were 13 training academies statewide. In 1982, the Michigan Justice Training Commission was established and MLEOTC created the Law Enforcement Resource Center, which continues in operation to this day. And, in 1985, the current Recognition of Prior Training and Experience program, known as Waiver, was created.

In the next two decades, tribal police, railroad police, and private security police were added, as well as a federal grant program for domestic violence training. A second JTA was completed in 1996, the curriculum rose to 562 hours, and the Justice Training Commission merged with MLEOTC to form the 15-member Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards. The staff reached a peak of 33 members during this time frame, but now stands at 18.

Since 2000, we developed an automated Information and Tracking Network (MITN), speed measurement standards, a basic training school for veterans, in-service training standards, and criteria for audiovisual recordings of interrogations. In 2004, the Public Safety Officer Benefit program became an MCOLES responsibility. All of our projects include input and direction

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from professionals like you. We conduct research and comply with state statutes, but we rely on practitioners across the state to help establish the validity of our work products.

The basic training curriculum now stands at 594 hours. Patrol rifle, standard field sobriety testing, LEIN training, and tactical emergency casualty care were included in basic training during the past few years. Today there are 20 academies statewide. In 2013, MCOLES licensed over 600 officers in Michigan.

On a personal note, I resisted writing this article at first. The old annual reports and council minutes were difficult to locate and interpret in their full context. I had little personal knowledge of the early days. But sometimes those of us at MCOLES, and others in the profession, forget that current programs were created in the distant past by real people with real expertise. And, they had to work without a formal blueprint to guide their activities as none existed at the time. Imagine facing a blank sheet of paper and being asked to create a physical fitness test for the policing profession. Where would you begin? Since Michigan was one of the first states to establish such testing, the staff could not “borrow” ideas from others commissions. But as I made my way through the research and talked to former employees, I increasingly got a better sense of it all.

During my research I ran across my brother’s name located in the 1972 meeting minutes. He was with the Attorney General’s office at the time and attended a meeting or two. We didn’t talk about it back then as MLEOTC had little meaning for me at the time. In 1972, I was weeping uncontrollably in boot camp, having been drafted out of MSU into the Army. But unlike the real heroes of the Vietnam era, the closest I came to a combat injury was when I got carsick driving the Colonel to a meeting at Fort Knox.

But writing this article has given me a much better feel for the origins of MCOLES and for the hard work done by those who came before me. The research helped me relate to the past in a personal way. Over time, I began to see the original staff as individuals with unique talents. They were much more than just young idealists in peach colored sport coats and long sideburns. We’re still facing many of the same issues as before, but I can’t help feel a little bit better about my organization and the policing profession in Michigan. I am honored to work with my colleagues here and those of you throughout the state. But now, knowing more about our origins, I have a greater appreciation for the accomplishments of those who preceded me. Just look how far we’ve come in all those years.



CATCHING UP WITH COL. RITCHIE DAVIS, (RET.)

BY MIKE LOGGHE

Col. Ritchie Davis had a wonderful career in law enforcement and became the 12th Director of the Michigan State Police (MSP) before retiring in 1991. Colonel Davis was known as a "Trooper's Colonel" and I was fortunate enough to speak with him about his long career in police work. At 78 years old, he is still going strong, enjoying retirement in Northern Michigan.

Prior to being hired by the MSP, Colonel Davis was an officer with the Ann Arbor Police Department. He gained international notoriety for one of the most bizarre cases any police officer could ever encounter in August of 1959.

Cheng Lim was a foreign exchange student from Singapore and was sponsored by the Methodist Church to study at the University of Michigan in 1952. While in Ann Arbor he attended the First Methodist Church at State and Huron.

In 1955, Lim did not apply for the fall term as he was distressed due to low grades, feeling he had failed the people that had brought him to Ann Arbor. In an attempt to fake his suicide, Lim walked down to the Huron River and threw his passport into it. Later that night he went to the First Methodist Church and climbed a ladder that led to an attic on the north side of the church. For the next four years, Lim lived in this cramped attic space. During the night he would sneak down to the kitchen for food and water.

Lim's disappearance did not go unnoticed as the pastor of the church and university officials attempted to find him. They made contact with his brother and sister, who could offer no clues as to his whereabouts. Eventually a missing person report was made with the police department.

His years of seclusion ended on August 30, 1959, when the police department received a call of a prowler at the church. Then Officer Davis and his partner, Officer Norman Olmstead, responded to the church for the

call. The officers searched the interior of the church but could not find anything suspicious.

As they walked outside they observed a fleeting glance of Lim climbing a ladder, which lead to the attic. They quickly followed and entered the attic discovering a makeshift bed, coffee jar, and a box of crackers. Officer Davis then directed his flashlight down a four foot deep



(Ret.) Col. Davis and MSP D/Sgt. Richard Rule

hole in packed insulation, where he discovered Lim rolled up into a ball, trying to hide from the officers.

Taken to the police station, Lim revealed his story about his self-imposed exile. Lim stated he would have been disgraced if he had returned home with poor grades and couldn't face his friends at the university who had given him financial aid.

During his self-imposed exile, Lim brushed his teeth with match sticks, ate once a day, and skipped rope for exercise. The attic was completely unfinished and the temperature would often reach 100 degrees in the non-ventilated space in the summer and was bitter cold in the winter.

The police department had received numerous prowler calls at the church during the years Lim stayed in the

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attic. Caretakers lived in the basement of the church and occasionally heard noises when Lim was on the first floor gathering food during the night. Lim was finally discovered as the church hired a security guard due to their continued concerns. The security guard, William Edison, heard noises in the church and phoned the police department, which lead to Lim's arrest.



Lim's story gained international publicity and it was published in newspapers across the country. Instead of ending up in jail, local businessmen created a fund to help him resume his education. The government reinstated his visa and the university permitted him to enroll again. Lim graduated from the University of Michigan in 1961 and went on to obtain his master's degree.

Colonel Davis decided to end his career with Ann Arbor on a cold winter night when he was walking the midnight beat downtown. Two MSP troopers were driving downtown and pulled over to let Colonel Davis warm up in their car. He then thought how nice it would be not to have to walk the beat and decided to become a trooper with the MSP where he attended the 52nd Recruit School, with a starting wage of \$3,200 a year.

He quickly moved up the ranks and was appointed as Colonel in 1987 by Governor James Blanchard, a very strong supporter of MSP. During his tenure as Colonel, he had many significant events that occurred and these were often heartbreaking. Shortly after being appointed, Traverse City was hosting the National Governors Conference. While directing traffic,

Trooper Jim Bowland was struck and killed by a motorist. Colonel Davis was in the process of providing security to the nation's governors and during this stressful period he then faced the tragedy of the death of a trooper.

He was also Director when the lone occupant of a Yugo automobile drove off the Mackinac Bridge in 1989, causing national headlines. The victim could not be immediately recovered from the bottom of the straits due to the difficulty of retrieval. The Colonel said there was pressure on MSP to retrieve the victim's body as quickly as possible and of course they attempted to do so. A little known fact is that a MSP diver almost died during the recovery. His equipment failed and he had to "buddy breath" with another diver to get to the surface of the water.

A proud moment was when he won approval from the Governor to replace traditional .38 caliber revolvers with 9mm semi-automatic pistols. This was not an easy task to first obtain approval and then to train and outfit the entire department with the pistols. Troopers Tom Baldis and Dennis Willing worked extremely hard putting a proposal together justifying the needs for this transition. The Colonel explained to Governor Blanchard that law enforcement officers were being out-gunned on the street due to criminals using high powered weapons against the officers. The Governor first refused the request due to the budget, but later that same week called the Colonel and told him "to go ahead and make the switch" due to the Colonel's presentation about the officers' safety.

Colonel Davis enjoyed visiting the posts to personalize the Office of the Director. During one visit to the Calumet Post in the Upper Peninsula, he walked in and was greeted by the desk sergeant. He asked the sergeant (a very long

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term MSP employee) how he was doing and the sergeant responded, “I was fine until you walked in the door.” The Colonel was perplexed and asked the sergeant why and he replied, “I bet the troops \$25 bucks the Director would not come up here and now I owe them!”

A very personally satisfying experience for Colonel Davis was meeting with President Reagan. The President was in Detroit and Colonel Davis was in the same building as him. A secret service agent approached the Colonel and told him the President would like to meet with him. Colonel Davis had no idea why the President wanted to see him and Detroit Chief William Hart. A secret service agent brought the President into an office where they were waiting, left, leaving the two alone with the President. As it turned out, the President didn't have an agenda, but just wanted to sit and talk with the two leaders of the state's largest police agencies. Colonel Davis stated it was unbelievable to just sit and talk with the President of the United States.



Colonel Davis believes in the concept of community policing and he believes officers of his era were very good at it before it became fashionable to do so. When he graduated from recruit school, the commandant told the new troopers to respect the institution of law enforcement and when they see the farmer in the field “get out of your car and go talk to him. That’s the person paying your wage.” He never forgot these words and always believed that the “further you get away from the people, the less effective you are.”

As Colonel, he always told his command that if they could not provide the resources that the trooper on the street needed, they were failing them. His advice to new police officers would be to “get close to the public, remember the letter of the law vs. the spirit of it, always be fair and impartial, never forgetting the trust that has been placed in you.”

MCOLES would like to thank Colonel Davis for the service he has provided to the citizens of Michigan.

If you know of a senior deputy, officer, or trooper that you would like spotlighted in the MCOLES Newsletter, or any officer who has significantly given back to the community, please contact Michael Logghe at logghe@michigan.gov or 517-896-7021.

MCOLLES SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE: SHERIFF RON LAHTI, KEWEENAW COUNTY

Sheriff Ron Lahti grew up in Keweenaw County and dreamed of becoming sheriff as a boy. His dreams probably did not include living in the sheriff's residence and raising his five children there! Sheriff Lahti is the only sheriff in the state that actually lives in the jail with the inmates. Two other interesting facts are that the Sheriff's Office is the most northern law enforcement agency in the state and is the only one for all of Keweenaw County.

Sheriff Lahti grew up in Mohawk, not far from the Keweenaw County Sheriff's Office in Eagle River and has been sheriff since 1993. The sheriff's residence/jail was built in 1886 and can hold up to seven prisoners. The county itself is on the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula, surrounded by Lake Superior and has a population of about 2,200. The Sheriff's Office is a 24/7 operation and has five full time deputies. Sheriff Lahti stated that living in the jail enables him to keep a deputy on the road at all times, but often leads to late nights for him. Many times the sheriff himself maintains the jail while the night deputy responds to a call. When the deputy leaves the jail, he wakes the sheriff up, who then monitors the inmates. Luckily for the sheriff it is a short commute from his bedroom to the prisoners' cells

Sheriff Lahti and his wife Jennifer, have lived in the jail for over 22 years as he is serving his sixth term. All five of their children called the jail home for nearly their entire lives. The sheriff's residence sits on the first and second floor, while the inmate's cells are entirely on the first. A walk from the living room of his residence to the cells is just through a short hallway.

The Sheriff's wife Jennifer is the cook for the jail and whatever the family is eating, the prisoners eat. Mrs. Lahti is an employee of the sheriff's office and attended



*The Keweenaw County Sheriff's Office
and Sheriff's Residence*

the 160 hours of training to become a certified corrections officer. She stated she has enjoyed living within the sheriff's office and raising their children there. It is very clear that she does much more at the jail than cooking. Clearly she is an unpaid deputy that seems to function in many roles for the county. Her hard work is rewarded with the satisfaction that the citizens have provided so much support for her family and she is very appreciative of the Keweenaw County residents.

Citizens come in and out of the sheriff's office as they would at any other police department. The difference being that the reception area is just steps away from the first floor living quarters. Imagine having strangers walk into your home every day and prisoners living and sleeping a short distance from your family! Needless to say, it takes a special couple to do this and to do so professionally.



*Jennifer Lahti and Sheriff Ron Lahti,
Keweenaw County*

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MCOLES SPOTLIGHT: ROBERT “WAYNE” SNYDER

Remember the rigors of the police academy and how hard the physical and mental aspects of it were? Imagine completing an entire career and then starting a new one. Imagine at 60 years old deciding to become a police officer, enter the police academy and excel at it. That is exactly what Robert “Wayne” Snyder did at Kirtland Community College’s Regional Police Academy.

Recruit Snyder retired from the Bloomfield Township Fire Department in 2006, moved to St. Helen and was hired as a firefighter with the Richfield Township Public Safety Department. Richfield Township is a full service department offering fire, paramedic, and police services. Recruit Snyder was a licensed firefighter and paramedic, but had not been to a police academy and could not participate in the police activities of the department. Richfield Police Chief Brad Bannon told Recruit Snyder that if he went through the police academy, he would hire him as a public safety officer. Recruit Snyder was intrigued by the thought and decided to pay his own way through the academy.

Snyder entered Kirtland Community College’s Regional Police Academy in July of 2014 and completed the 677 hour academy in November. Snyder was awarded the MCOLES Outstanding Performance Award for his performance during the academy. Snyder excelled in the academy surrounded by recruits over half his age, competing with and encouraging these recruits during the session.

Snyder thoroughly enjoyed his academy experience and the amount of training he received. He believes he exceeded in the academy as his philosophy is “when you think you know everything, you are bound to fail.” He was surprised by the chemistry that developed with the 16 other recruits and how tight the unit was by the end of the academy. The recruits blended together using their strengths, whether it was mental or physical, to help those that were struggling. The quality of instruction and instructors far exceeded his expectations. He

stated every instructor came into the class enthusiastic and presented their material in a very professional manner.

Going into the academy he was in good shape from a



John Steele, MCOLES, Sheriff James Bosscher, Commissioner, Robert “Wayne” Snyder, and Director Tom Grace

lifetime of running. Snyder had completed the Detroit Free Press Marathon and is always looking for a new challenge. During a hilly, hot, four mile run, he placed in the top third of the academy class. When Snyder was done with the run, he ran back to the last recruit that was some distance back. Snyder then completed the run with this recruit who was struggling, offering encouragement until they finished together. He exhibited this teamwork during the entire academy and the young recruits respected him for his leadership. At the end of the academy, a number of recruits thanked him for his assistance and encouragement during the academy session. When they were struggling they fed off the fact that a 60 year old man was excelling in the class and if he could do it, they could too.

Snyder decided to enter the police academy as he “loves personal challenges. I just enjoy doing things that most people think they wouldn’t be able to do.” Coming out of the academy he felt he walked away “a lot better person than I was when I entered it.” I believe this is an

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MCOLES Spotlight: Robert “Wayne” Snyder ~ continued from page 9>

amazing statement considering his age and says volumes about the quality of training he received at Kirtland.

Officer Snyder now works part-time as a police officer with Richfield Township. His first interesting dispatched run was for a school break-in. He and his partner assisted the Roscommon County Sheriff’s Office in the apprehension of four people that broke into a school. A foot chase ensued and all four subjects were successfully arrested.

Snyder said his family was very supportive of his academy experience and his decision to enter law enforcement. He loves the choice he has made and looks forward to policing in Northern Michigan. MCOLES would like to congratulate Officer Snyder for his hard work during the academy and his commitment to public service.



MCOLES Spotlight on Service : Sheriff Ron Lahti ~ continued from page 8>

Sheriff Lahti believes it is extremely important that the citizens and visitors of his county receive the same level of service that the citizens in large counties like Oakland and Wayne would expect from their sheriff’s office. Professionalism has been extremely important to him and his deputies receive constant and ongoing training. As the only department in the county they must be “jack of all trades” and his deputies specialize in traffic crash investigation, first responder functions, marine, and snowmobile patrol.

MCOLES would like to thank Sheriff Lahti and his staff for their service to the citizens of Keweenaw County!

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UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETINGS

June 10, 2015

September 16, 2015

November 4, 2015

December 9, 2015

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MCOLES STAFF & RESPONSIBILITIES

NAME	PHONE	E-MAIL/FAX	RESPONSIBILITIES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTION		FAX: 517-322-6439	
David Harvey	517-322-1417	harveyd2@michigan.gov	Executive Director ~ Commission Issues; Legislative Issues; Budget Issues
Hermína Kramp	517-322-5621	kramph@michigan.gov	Deputy Executive Director ~ Administration; Commission Issues; Budget Issues; Legislative Issues
Jacquelyn Beeson	517-322-1417	beesonj@michigan.gov	Executive Assistant
COMMISSION COUNSEL			
John Szczubelek	517-322-5435	szczubelekj@michigan.gov	Commission legal matters
CAREER DEVELOPMENT		FAX: 517-322-5611	
Wayne Carlson	517-322-5614	carlsonw1@michigan.gov	Manager ~ CPL; EVO; Speed Measurement; Sexual Assault; Domestic Violence; Evaluation & Measurement
Patrick Hutting	517-322-3967	huttingp@michigan.gov	Medical Standards; LEOSA; In-Service Training; Special Use Requests
Danny Rosa	517-322-6449	rosad@michigan.gov	Licensing Examination; Testing; Firearms Standard; Use of Force; Evaluation & Measurement
H.R.Developer	517-636-0699	Vacant	Academy Training Curriculum; Teaching Methods; Training Standards
STANDARDS COMPLIANCE		FAX: 517-322-5611	
John Steele	517-322-3966	steelej@michigan.gov	Manager ~ Academy Issues; PA 330; Railroad
Darnell Blackburn	517-322-6637	blackburnd@michigan.gov	DCC; MOTT; OCC; WCR; MCJ; DPMA; WCS; PA 330
Lynn Ried	517-322-1949	riedl@michigan.gov	WSCC; GRCC; GVSU; KCC; KTA; LCC; MSP; Domestic Violence
Michael Logghe	517-636-0698	logghe@michigan.gov	NMU; LSSU; WCC; NMC; KLCC; FSU
Joyce Nelson	517-322-5627	nelsonj20@michigan.gov	License Revocations; Investigations; PSOB; FOIA Requests
Sandi Luther	517-322-6608	luthers@michigan.gov	Recognition of Prior Training & Experience Program (RPTEP); LERC
LICENSING & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES		FAX: 517-316-0824	
David Lee	517-322-5826	leed14@michigan.gov	Manager ~ Licensing; Records; Annual Registration; LED; MITN Development; SQL Inquiries; IT Research
Holly Baer	517-322-1519	baerh@michigan.gov	MITN System Administrator; IT Resource Coordinator; Business Solutions; File Net Coordinator
Rhonda Hooson	517-322-5615	hoosonr@michigan.gov	Licensing; License Testing & R&W Test Data; Operator Training & Agreements; Annual Registration; Railroad; CCW Training Programs & Instructors; Employment History Requests; Network Help Desk
Diane Horwath	517-322-1384	horwathd@michigan.gov	Public Web Site Administration: Job Postings; PET / R&W Test Dates; Newsletter; Annual Report; Brochures; Facebook; Special Projects
Gina Saucedo	517-322-5617	rosendall-saucedog@michigan.gov	MJT Fund; Grants; LED; TTL, Contract Administration
Debra Thelen	517-322-3968	thelend15@michigan.gov	Fiscal Control